

Message Text

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USDA/FAS:AMEAD

TA/AGR/AID:GPARMAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:EAID, EAGR, FAO, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN FOOD NEEDS

REF: ROME 13242 AND 13662 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM FAO DIRGEN BOERMA TO THE
SECRETARY WAS RECEIVED OCTOBER 4 THROUGH COMMERCIAL
CHANNELS:

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A. QUOTE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. WISH EXPRESS MY GROWING

ANXIETY OVER POSSIBILITY OF MEETING URGENT GRAIN REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SPECIALLY IN VIEW OF DETERIORATING CROP PROSPECTS IN MAJOR PRODUCING COUNTRIES. IN PARTICULAR FOLLOWING CONFIDENTIAL CONSULTATIONS WITH INDIAN AUTHORITIES I WISH TO COMMUNICATE THE FOLLOWING FAO ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN FOOD POSITION.

B. THIS YEAR'S ERRATIC MONSOON WILL SERIOUSLY REDUCE HARVEST FROM PRESENT SUMMER CROP MAINLY RICE AND PROVIDES UNFAVORABLE SOWING CONDITIONS FOR NEXT WINTER CROP MAINLY WHEAT. THE IMPACT CANNOT YET BE PRECISELY MEASURED IN ALL STATES BUT FAO ANTICIPATES OCTOBER/NOVEMBER HARVEST WILL BE AT LEAST TEN PERCENT BELOW LAST SEASON. THE SUPPLY SITUATION IS MORE SERIOUS THAN IN THE 1972 DROUGHT YEAR BECAUSE CENTRAL STOCKS ARE DEPLETED AND

POPULATION IS LARGER. SOME SCOPE EXISTS FOR SUPPLEMENTING MARKET SUPPLIES IF PRESENT ACTION AGAINST PRIVATE HOARDING SUCCEEDS. TAKING ACCOUNT OF PROBABLE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND RELIEF REQUIREMENTS AND ALSO PRESENT PROCUREMENT PLANS AND POSSIBILITIES, FAO ASSESSMENT CONFIRMS NEED FOR IMPORTS OF 3 MILLION TONS ADDITIONAL TO PRESENT IMPORT PLAN OF 4.5 MILLION TONS.

C. IN VIEW OF SEVERE FOREIGN EXCHANGE POSITION AND WIDE TRADE GAP THE POSSIBILITIES OF FURTHER LARGE-SCALE GRAIN IMPORTS ON COMMERCIAL TERMS APPEAR VERY LIMITED INDEED. THEREFORE I STRONGLY SUPPORT INDIA'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS ON DEFERRED PAYMENT, SPECIAL CREDIT, FOOD AID OR OTHER CONCESSIONAL TERMS. MOREOVER TO COVER CONTINGENCY THAT NEXT WINTER WHEAT CROP FALLS BELOW EXPECTATIONS, FAO IS ADVISING INDIAN AUTHORITIES TO PLAN NOW FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER GRAIN IMPORTS TO COVER PERIOD MARCH TO OCTOBER 1975.

D. ABOVE MESSAGE IS BEING SENT TO GOVERNMENTS OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, U.S., AS WELL AS PRESIDENT OF EEC COMMISSION AND SIMILAR ASSESSMENTS BEING PROVIDED WORLD BANK, IMF AND UN EMERGENCY FUND. PLEASE KEEP COMMUNICATION STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. HIGHEST CONSIDERED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ATION. END QUOTE

2. BOERMA'S TELEGRAM CLEARLY IS FOLLOW-UP OF HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH MARTIN AND/OR PAARLBERG REPORTED REFTELS. PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE TO BOERMA OUR RECEIPT OF HIS TELEGRAM AND INFORM HIM AS FOLLOWS: THE INDIANS HAVE DESCRIBED TO US THE KIND OF FOOD PROBLEMS THEY FACE THIS YEAR AND HAVE ASKED WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP. PL-480 IS

ONLY MODALITY WE HAVE FOR PROVIDING FOOD ON CONCESSIONAL
SALE BASIS. NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE SO FAR AS TO
AMOUNTS WE SHALL MAKE AVAILABLE TO INDIA. WE WILL KEEP
FAO ADVISED OF DEVELOPMENTS. INGERSOLL

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